MOUNTAIN STATE REPORTER

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 2006

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 11

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SEPTEMBER RED MEAT PRODUCTION

West Virginia - Commercial red meat production during September 2006 totaled 500,000 pounds. This was down 6 percent from September 2005 and up 12 percent from August 2006 production. Commercial red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter including beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Individual commodity production is total live weight of commercial slaughter.

Commercial cattle slaughter totaled 686,000 pounds live weight, down 22,000 pounds from September 2005. Cattle slaughter totaled 700 head, down 100 head from the previous year. The average live weight, at 985 pounds, was up 82 pounds from a year ago.

Commercial calf slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 205,000 pounds live weight, up 22,000 pounds from last year. Hog slaughter totaled 800 head, up 100 head from September 2005. The average live weight, at 242 pounds, was down 5 pounds from the previous year.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter totaled 8,000 pounds live weight, up 1,000 pounds from last year. Sheep and lamb slaughter totaled 100 head, the same as September 2005. The average live weight, at 113 pounds, was down 4 pounds from the previous year.

United States- Commercial red meat production totaled 3.93 billion pounds in September, up slightly from the previous year.

Beef production, at 2.16 billion pounds, was slightly above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.77 million head, down slightly from September 2005. The average live weight was up 7 pounds from the previous year, at 1,282 pounds.

Veal production totaled 12.8 million pounds, 3 percent below September a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 57,500 head, down 5 percent from September 2005. The average live weight was 2 pounds above last year, at 365 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.74 billion pounds, up slightly from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.83 million head, slightly below September 2005. The average live weight was 1 pound above the previous year, at 266 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 14.2 million pounds, was down 9 percent from September 2005. Sheep slaughter totaled 219,100 head, 5 percent below last year. The average live weight was 129 pounds, down 6 pounds from September a year ago.

January to September 2006 commercial red meat production was 35.2 billion pounds, up 4 percent from 2005. Accumulated beef production was up 6 percent from last year, veal was down 3 percent, pork was up 2 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down slightly.

September 2005 contained 22 weekdays (including one holiday) and 4 Saturdays. September 2006 contained 21 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays.

CHICKENS AND EGGS

United States- Egg production totaled 7.42 billion during September 2006, up 1 percent from last year. Production included 6.38 billion table eggs, and 1.04 billion hatching eggs, of which 977 million were broiler-type and 63 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during September 2006 averaged 343 million, up slightly from last year.

September egg production per 100 layers was 2,165 eggs, up slightly from September 2005.

All layers in the U.S. on October 1, 2006, totaled 343 million, up slightly from last year. The 343 million layers consisted of 288 million layers producing table or market type eggs, 53.2 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.65 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on October 1, 2006, averaged 71.7 eggs per 100 layers, down slightly from October 1, 2005.

Egg-type chicks hatched during September 2006 totaled 36.8 million, up 10 percent from September 2005. Eggs in incubators totaled 35.2 million on October 1, 2006, up 4 percent from a year ago. Domestic placements of **egg-type pullet chicks** for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 243,000 during September 2006, down 35 percent from September 2005.

Broiler-type chicks hatched during September 2006 totaled 772 million, up slightly from September 2005. Eggs in incubators totaled 632 million on October 1, 2006, up slightly from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 7.06 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during September 2006, down 1 percent from September 2005.

CATTLE ON FEED

United States - Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 12.0 million head on November 1, 2006. The inventory was 4 percent above November 1, 2005 and 6 percent above November 1, 2004. This is the highest November 1 inventory since the series began in 1996.

Placements in feedlots during October totaled 2.43 million, 13 percent below 2005 and 10 percent below 2004. Net placements were 2.34 million head. This is the second lowest placements for the month of October since the series began in 1996. During October, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 840,000, 600-699 pounds were 645,000, 700-799 pounds were 485,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 455,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during October totaled 1.77 million, 2 percent above 2005 but 2 percent below 2004.

Other disappearance totaled 81,000 during October, 40 percent above 2005 and 23 percent above 2004.

CROP PRODUCTION

United States - Corn for Grain area harvested and to be harvested for grain is forecast at 71.0 million acres, unchanged from October but down 5 percent from 2005. The November 1 corn objective yield data indicates the second highest ear count on record for the combined 10 objective yield States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), down 1 percent from the record high set in 2004. Indicated ears per acre are higher than last year in all objective yield States, except Kansas and South Dakota. The indicated number of ears per acre in Illinois is the highest on record.

Corn production is forecast at 10.7 billion bushels, down 1 percent from October and 3 percent lower than 2005. Based on conditions as of November 1, yields are expected to average 151.2 bushels per acre, down 2.3 bushels from October but 3.3 bushels higher than last year. If realized, the yield would be the second largest on record, behind 2004. Yield forecasts are lower than last month across much of the western and central Corn Belt and Atlantic Coast States as producers reported that actual harvest yields were not as good as expected earlier due to lower grain weight per ear. Stalk quality and lodging problems were also reported in some areas. Producers in the northern Great Plains, Delta States, and parts of the Southeast reported better than expected yields. Compared with last year, yields are higher in all Corn Belt States, except Iowa and Minnesota.

Soybean growers expect to harvest 74.5 million acres, unchanged from last month but up 5 percent from 2005. Record high yields are forecast in Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, and New York, along with record tying yields in Illinois and South Carolina. The November objective yield pod counts are down slightly from last month and down 3 percent from last year's record high pod counts. Six of the objective yield program States showed an increase in pod counts from October, while the remaining five States decreased. The largest increase from last month is in Kansas, where pod counts increased 5 percent. If realized, pod counts from the November objective yield survey will be the second highest on record in Indiana, behind only 2004.

After lagging behind the normal pace on October 1, harvest progress improved during the first half of the month and by mid-October harvest had progressed to 69 percent complete, 4 points ahead of normal. However, progress was slowed in the latter part of October as rain and cooler temperatures delayed fieldwork in the eastern Corn Belt. As of October 29, growers had harvested 83 percent of their acreage, compared with 91 percent last year and the 5-year average of 85 percent. Harvest was nearly complete in Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, and the Dakotas by the end of the month.

Soybean production is forecast at 3.20 billion bushels, up slightly from October and 5 percent above 2005. If realized, this would be the largest U.S. soybean crop on record. Based on November 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 43.0 bushels per acre, up 0.2 bushel from October and equal to last year's record high yield. Producers in the northern Great Lakes States, Delaware, New York, North Carolina, and the Dakotas are realizing higher yields than expected last month, while yield prospects decreased slightly as harvest progressed in Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. Area for harvest in the U.S. is forecast at 74.5 million acres, unchanged from last month but up 5 percent from 2005.

FARM LABOR

United States - There were 1,077,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of October 8-14, 2006, down 5 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 797,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 280,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $9.95 per hour during the October 2006 reference week, up 34 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $9.25 per hour, up 35 cents from last October, while livestock workers earned $9.41 per hour compared with $9.15 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $9.29 per hour, was up 33 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 41.6 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 1 percent from a year ago.

The **largest decreases** in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) regions. Rain, snow, and freezing temperatures in the Lake region slowed progress of field activities considerably, decreasing the need for hired workers. In the Southern Plains region, cool, wet weather in Texas caused most field work to be delayed, lowering the demand for hired workers. Drought conditions through most of the Southeast region curtailed hay growth and postponed small grain seeding which led to a minimized demand for field workers. In the Mountain I region, rain and wet fields slowed progress of winter wheat seeding and lessened the need for hired workers.

The **largest increases** in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions, and Florida. In the Pacific region, ideal weather allowed winter wheat seeding and fall crop harvests to progress rapidly, increasing the demand for hired workers. Field activities in the Northeast II region were accelerating due to the drier conditions compared with last year's very wet reference week. Therefore, more hired workers were needed. In the Appalachian II region, cotton and soybean harvests in Tennessee continued to make excellent progress and remained ahead of normal, necessitating more field workers. In Florida, drier conditions compared with the previous year's deluge of tropical storms led to more normal progress of field activities and caused stronger demand for hired workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Pacific, Southern Plains, Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah), Mountain I, and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) regions. In the Pacific and Mountain II regions, the higher wages were due to a larger percentage of salaried workers putting in fewer hours, which pushed the average hourly wage higher. The higher wages in the Southern Plains region were due to the wet conditions which kept hours worked down and drove the wage rates up. In the Mountain I region, the higher wages were due to a lower proportion of part time workers. The higher wages in the Delta region were due to a greater percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force.

The 2006 U.S. all hired worker annual average wage rate was $9.87, up 4 percent from the 2005 annual average wage rate of $9.51. The U.S. field worker annual average wage rate was $9.06, up 36 cents from last year's annual average. The field and livestock worker combined annual average wage rate at the U.S. level was $9.15, up 4 percent from last year's annual average wage rate of $8.84.

DECEMBER SURVEY

A sample of West Virginia farmers will be part of the national survey of producers who will be contacted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's annual December survey. This survey will be conducted from November 27 through December 13, by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service by contacting farmers by mail, telephone and personal interview. The purpose of this survey is to obtain information to make estimates for the 2006 crop year. Commodities targeted by this survey are corn, soybeans, and hay. Winter wheat seeding for the 2007 crop year, December 1 inventories of hogs, chickens and grain storage capacity are also collected.

We depend on the voluntary cooperation of the producers in our sample. A high response rate will ensure that West Virginia agriculture is fully and accurately represented in the regional and national picture. **As always, all individual information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.** Results of the hog survey will be released December 27, 2006 and results from the crop survey will be released January 12, 2007.

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